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4PM-AMERICAN DETAINED; 2ND LD - WRITETHRU; A067-A058-A038,460

4EDS: COMBINES PVS AND ADDS US EMBASSY PROTEST

PEKING (AP) - AN AMERICAN TEACHER FROM DENVER WAS HANDCUFFED AFTER A STRUGGLE AND DETAINED BY CHINESE POLICE FOR INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGED THEFT OF STATE SECRETS; U.S. EMBASSY AND FOREIGN SOURCES SAID TODAY. THE SOURCES QUOTED CHINESE POLICE AS ACCUSING LISA WICHSER, 28, OF BEING A SPY FOR THE U.S. CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY. MISS WICHSER IS THE FIRST AMERICAN DETAINED IN CHINA SINCE THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA RE-ESTABLISHED DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS IN 1979.

THE SOURCES SAID MISS WICHSER WAS PICKED UP FRIDAY NIGHT AT THE FRIENDSHIP HOTEL WHERE SHE LIVES. SHE RESISTED; WAS HANDCUFFED; AND WAS VISITED BY A U.S. CONSULAR OFFICER AT A POLICE STATION. THE U.S. EMBASSY SAID IT PROTESTED THE HANDLING OF THE CASE ON GROUNDS IT VIOLATED THE U.S.-CHINESE CONSULAR AGREEMENT.

FOREIGN SOURCES SAID CHINESE POLICE ORDERED HOTEL ATTENDANTS TO SUMMON MISS WICHSER FROM HER ROOM TO RECEIVE AN "URGENT TELEGRAM." WHEN SHE WENT DOWNSTAIRS; THEY TRIED TO DETAIN HER; BUT SHE STRUGGLED; RESISTED; AND WAS HANDCUFFED AND TAKEN AWAY.

THE DETENTION OCCURRED AS CHINA STEPS UP ITS WARNINGS TO BE VIGILANT AGAINST FOREIGN; CAPITALIST AND TAIWAN SPIES. CHINA ALSO IS CLAMPING DOWN ON CONTACTS BETWEEN CHINESE AND FOREIGNERS.

MISS WICHSER HAS SOUGHT PERMISSION TO MARRY A CHINESE ECONOMICS STUDENT; AND OFFICIALS OF HER SCHOOL REPORTEDLY HAVE APPROVED; WHILE THOSE OF HER FIANCE'S SCHOOL HAVE NOT. CHINA IS EXTREMELY SENSITIVE ABOUT MARRIAGES BETWEEN CHINESE AND FOREIGNERS.

RESIDENTS OF MISS WICHSER'S BUILDING SAID POLICE TOLD HOTEL ATTENDANTS SHE HAD BEEN UNDER SURVEILLANCE FOR TWO MONTHS.

THE CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY; IN A BRIEF STATEMENT TODAY; SAID SHE HAD "VIOLATED CHINESE LAWS BY ENGAGING IN ACTIVITIES INCOMPATIBLE WITH HER STATUS." A SPOKESMAN WOULD NOT SPECIFY WHICH OF HER ACTIVITIES WERE CONSIDERED ILLEGAL.

(over)

AN EMBASSY STATEMENT SAID HER DETENTION - IT DID NOT USE THE TERM ARREST - "RELATES TO THE THEFT OF STATE SECRETS. WE ARE AWARE THAT THIS HAS A BROADER INTERPRETATION IN CHINESE SOCIETY THAN IT WOULD HAVE IN OUR OWN."

IN CHINA: VIRTUALLY ANY INFORMATION WHICH IS NOT OFFICIALLY PUBLISHED OR ANNOUNCED CAN BE CONSIDERED A STATE SECRET. A CHINESE EDITOR WAS RECENTLY SENTENCED TO FIVE YEARS FOR TELLING A FOREIGN JOURNALIST THE TIME, PLACE AND AGENDA OF A MEETING OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

MISS WICHSER IS FLUENT IN CHINESE; IS DOING RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS IN CHINA FOR HER DOCTORATE; AND HAS BEEN TEACHING ENGLISH FOR ABOUT TWO YEARS AT THE FOREIGN LANGUAGES INSTITUTE; SOURCES IN THE SMALL COMMUNITY OF FOREIGN EXPERTS SAID.

IN DENVER: E. THOMAS ROWE, ASSOCIATE DEAN OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER SAID MISS WICHSER WAS "QUIET AND NICE. SHE WOULD BE THE MOST IMPROBABLE PERSON TO BE INVOLVED IN A THING LIKE THIS. SHE IS ONE OF OUR BEST STUDENTS."

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